

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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DRAFTED BY: ARA:MEX:KMCKUNE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM ATHENS DATED MARCH 17, 1978 SENT
SECSTATE WASHDC, INS CO WASHDC, INS JFK NYC, PANAMA INFO
BEIRUT, MADRID IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ATHENS 2210

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: CVIS, IZ, SREF

SUBJ: IRAQI CITIZENS ATTEMPT TRAVEL TO U.S.

1. AMEMBASSY ATHENS HAS LEARNED THAT GROUP OF 41 IRAQUIS
ENTERED GREECE VIA MIDDLE EAST AIRLINES FLT. 251 ON 11
MARCH. MMST WERE MEMBERS OF PREVIOUS GROUP WHICH WAS
TURNED BACK AT MADRID EARLY FEBRUARY 78 AND EVENTUALLY
REACHED BEIRUT.

2. GROUP ENTERED WITHOUT GREEK VIASAS OR U.S. VISAS A VOW-
EDLY EN ROUTE PANAMA USING PANAMA VISAS WHICH WERE
PREVIOUSLY OBTAINED 30-31 JANUARY 78 IN ATHENS. GROUP
UNDER STRICT TRAVEL CONTROL WITH PASSPORTS CURRENTLY
HELD BY GREEK AIRPORT OFFICIALS. EMBASSY OBTAINED PPT.

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NOS., NAMES, DPOBS OF MEMBERS.

3. AT THIS POINT WE ARE NOT SURE WHETHER GREEK OFFICIALS
WILL PERMIT GROUP TO REMAIN LONGER OR INSIST ON THEIR
EARLY DEPARTURE. TRAVEL AGENCY ASSISTING GROUP HAS TOLD
AIRPORT OFFICIALS THAT IT IS REQUESTING U.S. VISAS FOR
TRANSIT VIA TWA TO PANAMA. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO VISA

APPLICATION BUT INFORMED GREEK OFFICIALS THAT WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO INTERVIEW GROUP MEMBERS SHOULD THEY CHOOSE TO APPLY.

4. ALTHOUGH AIRLINES IN ATHENS ARE WELL AWARE IF U.S. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS CONCERNING IRAQIS, IT IS NOT IMPOS-
SIBLE THAT SOME AIRLINE WILL COOPERATE AND BOARD GROUP FOR TRANSFER ELSEWHERE TO U.S. BOUND FLIGHT. MOST LIKELY PROSPECT, HOWEVER, IS GROUP'S RETURN TO LEBANON. AIRPORT OFFICIALS HAVE ASSURED EMBASSY THAT THEY WILL NOTIFY US OF GROUP'S DEPARTURE.
MCCLOSKEZ UNQUOTE VANCE

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